

The Married Life of Helen and Warren

By MABEL
HERBERT URNEROriginator of "Their Married
Life," Author of "The Jour-
nal of a Neglected Wife," "The
Woman Alone," Etc.HELEN'S EFFORTS TO SAVE A CLEANER'S BILL RESULT
MOST DISASTROUSLY

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Mabel Herbert Urner

"Dora, I am going to clean some things in gasoline. Don't light the stove until I'm through," cautioned Helen.

"I was just going to put on an iron for them dollies," grumbled Dora, who never took an order without some objection.

"Well, they can wait. Now, don't strike any matches. Get me that big pan you use for the starch."

In the bathroom Helen emptied the whole half gallon of gasoline into the starch pan and dipped into it her chiffon waist.

The filmy material wilted down as it soaked up the fluid. Her hands in rubber gloves, she swished it around, held it up to drain, and pinned it to the shade before the open window.

After dipping a lace collar and the net yoke and sleeves of her gray taffeta, the gasoline was still clear enough for something else. While she was at it, she would clean those pink satin slippers.

Even with the open window, the stupefying fumes were now sickeningly strong. Hastily, with held breath, she immersed the slippers, brushing them with a soft nailbrush.

The soiled gasoline she always saved to use again after it had cleared by standing, but now, too dizzy to pour it back into the small-mouthed bottle, she emptied it out into the washbasin. Then, escaping from the bathroom, she closed the door on the stifling fumes.

"Here, Dora," as she took the starch pan out to the kitchen, "wash this out well. This gasoline bottle's empty—I'll put it here on the lower shelf. Be careful not to use it for anything else."

When, a little later, she went back to the bathroom, the waist, except for the thicker parts around the neck and cuffs, was almost as stiff as the cleaners, they would have charged \$2 and done it no better.

It was now after three, and she was anxious for the things to dry quickly so there would be no traces of odor when Warren came home.

He had repeatedly forbidden her to use gasoline, insisting that he would pay any amount of cleaners' bills rather than have her take chances with this inflammable fluid.

The dress on the towel rack she rearranged so the air could get to the yoke and sleeves, but the slippers on the stone ledge outside the window were still quite wet.

She had just examined one and set it back when a lighted cigar butt, tossed from a window above, fell straight into the pink satin toe.

A sizzling flash and the gasoline-soaked slipper was aflame. For a second Helen stood petrified. Then, jerking up a long-handled bath brush, she thrust it off the ledge. But it was too late! The blaze had leaped to the thin lace waist.

Screaming for Dora, she hurled the waist into the bath tub and turned on the water. But now the dress had caught and the flames were leaping up the tiled wall.

Dora, bursting open the door, stared panic-stricken, then rushed back shrieking: "Fire! Fire!"

The water, now filling the tub, extinguished the waist; but the dress, which hung on the towel rack, was still ablaze. Frantically Helen tried to poke it down into the tub with the long-handled brush. Then, reaching over to turn on the shower, the flames caught the lace of her kimono sleeve, saturated with the gasoline fumes.

She might easily have smothered it with the heavy bath mat, but now, paralyzed with terror, she ran wildly out, too frightened even to scream. Blindly she dashed through the hall door that Dora had left open.

After that everything was a dazed blur. The draughty elevator shaft fanned the flaming sleeve as she flew stumblingly down the encircling stairway. Excited voices, rushing feet and Dora's still piercing shrieks of "Fire!"

Someone caught her. Something heavy was thrown about her. The rest blurred into oblivion.

"I've sent for her husband," it was a woman's voice, lowered to a discreet whisper.

"She'll soon be all right," a man's voice, deep and restful.

For several moments after the consciousness of the voices, Helen, still clinging to the sheltering darkness, kept her eyes closed.

A sharp pain in her shoulder. Someone was bandaging her arm. Then she realized that the man bending over her was Doctor Marden, whose office was on the first floor.

"You're all right now," reassuringly, as he met her bewildered gaze. "Drink a little of this," raising her head to the glass.

Dropping back on the pillow, she saw Dora and Mr. Thompson, their superintendent, at the foot of the bed. Standing just back of the doctor was Mrs. Reed, who had an apartment on the floor below.

Still dazed, Helen again sought refuge in the protective darkness of closed eyelids. The heavy odor of iodine added to her sense of strangeness. Her mind was struggling to bring order and clearness from her chaotic thoughts.

She heard Mr. Thompson murmur something to the doctor and tiptoed heavily from the room. Then the telephone rang and Mrs. Reed whispered, "I'll answer it."

"Does your head ache?" asked the doctor.

As though to locate the confused throbbing pain, Helen raised her hand to her head. There was a blood-chilling feel of crisp singed hair. Then a leaping terror as her fear-stiffened fingers groped over her face.

"No, your face isn't touched," comforted the doctor, divining her fears. "You got off very easy—gasoline is dangerous stuff. Does that bandage feel too tight?"

A slam of the outer door. Though her face was to the wall, she knew it was Warren who burst into the room.

The next second he was kneeling by the bed. The vague dread of his stern reproof fell from her as she felt his encircling arms.

"It's all right, Mr. Curtis," the doctor's voice was quietly reassuring. "Only a slight burn under the arm."

"How did it happen?" huskily.

"Cleaning something in gasoline."

"Gasoline!" groaned Warren.

"Yes, they will use it. Your wife ran out into the hall—worst thing she could have done. If Mrs. Reed hadn't thrown a rug about her it might have been serious. Everybody else seemed paralyzed."

Mrs. Reed! So she owed her rescue to Mrs. Reed! The words throbbed in the blurred blackness before Helen's closed eyes.

With awkward, unsteady fingers Warren was smoothing back the singed hair.

"She's suffering a little from shock. I'll leave some quieting powders in case she can't sleep. You can give her one at nine and repeat in an hour if necessary. I'll call in the morning to dress the arm."

The doctor gone, Helen for the first time looked up at Warren. He was strangely white and haggard.

"Oh," faintly, "they frightened you when they phoned."

"That's all right—don't think of me. Does your arm hurt?" still smoothing the crisp, roughened hair.

Her head moved in denial, not wanting to admit the pain.

Mrs. Reed, who had been waiting in the other room, came to the door. "You don't need me now, Mr. Curtis, but if you should later—just 'phone down."

"I won't attempt to thank you, Mrs. Reed," Warren rose from the side of the bed. "There are some things you can—"

"Oh, please don't speak of it. I'm very glad I was able to do something. We had almost the same accident in our family—I suppose that's why I thought of the rug."

He was following her to the door. Their low murmured voices came from the hall.

Helen's troubled thoughts were rehearsing the tragedy. The bathroom! What damage had been done? She had visions of a heavy repair bill—of the tiled walls and porcelain tub cracked by the flames.

Warren was again by the bed, but she did not look up. Just then it seemed easier to lie there with closed eyes. Now that they were alone, she was struggling against a hysterical desire to burst into tears. She yearned yet dreaded for him to comfort her.

There was a long silence. He was holding her hand, stroking slowly the unbandaged arm. From the street came the rhythmic clatter of hoofs and the receding rumbling of wheels.

"Well, Kitten, how about the gasoline? Is one lesson going to be enough?"

Helen nodded, biting her lips to steadiness. Another silence. Then she asked, quivering:

"Dear, the bathroom! Did—did it injure the walls or ceiling?"

"Haven't looked," briefly. "You're all right—that's all that counts. Any damage is dirt cheap if it'll make you leave that infernal stuff alone."

"Oh, I'll never use it again," choking back a sob. "I'll never even have it in the house."

"All right, Kitten, I won't rub it in. A jolt like this is pretty tough on both of us." Then, with relieving humor, "Well, you won't have to frizz your hair for a while. You've made a pretty good job of that."

Cruel Hint.

"Are those field glasses any good?" "Indeed they are; you can even see Bob's new mustache with them on clear days."

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Now Strong as a
Man.

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Neighboring Society.

"Oh, mother," cried Mabel, who had never visited in the country. "I have just had a letter from my schoolmate inviting me to spend two weeks on her father's farm."

Mabel's mother looked up languidly. "Yes, dear," she remarked, "and what does she say about the society in the neighborhood? Does she mention anyone?"

"No," answered Mabel thoughtfully, "but I've heard her mention the 'Society' and 'Guernseys'."

"Oh, well," said her mother, "I presume they are pleasant people."—Rehoboth Sunday Herald.

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SOME RIFLE FIRING KINKS

There Are a Thousand Things Not Mentioned in "Drill Regulations" That Recruit Must Learn.

The average recruit who starts in at West Point knows as much about the fine points of rifle firing as a longshoreman about flying. First he masters the elementary steps—the manual of arms and the correct firing positions, says the Popular Science Monthly. Then he must learn a thousand facts not mentioned in the "drill regulations." Among the rifle kinks, for instance, is the smoking of the glass rifle sights for work in the sun. By simply holding the sights over the flame of a match—or, better, over an alcohol flame—a light layer of lamp-black is spread over the sight which enables the soldier to fire even when he is directly facing the sun. And reflected glare is eliminated so that he can work without danger to his eyes.

Another kink is the doubling up of the ordinary rifle strap in order to use it to obtain a sling-grip. By making the sling short enough, it is possible for the left hand to obtain a viselike grip on the rifle. This helps considerably in steadying it.

Hard Luck.

One day after shoveling soil on his father's allotment for two hours little Jenny began to cry. "What's the trouble, my little man?" asked a sympathetic bystander. "A bad tramp come along and stole the shovel from the boy in the next allotment." "Well, my lad, it's nice to be sympathetic," said the looker-on, "but you mustn't worry so over other people's affairs."

"It ain't that," said Jenny. "I'm crying because he didn't steal my shovel, too."

But Lottie Hadn't One.

Flossie (alluding to her new ring)—"It isn't always what a present costs that makes it appreciated."

Lottie (who doesn't think much of it)—"No, dear. Very often it is what other people think it costs."

If a man occasionally tells a woman how pretty she looks she will forgive most of the other lies he tells her.

I'm helping to save white bread by eating more

Post Toasties

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

Bobby

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

Bobby

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

Bobby

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

Bobby

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

Bobby

ons to make me a comfortable on the long, broad bench. The old priest could express his thoughts so plainly that I understood almost as well as if we were able to converse, and when I was in doubt took a board and made drawings in chalklike but expressive way. I soon realized that he considered me as a messenger by their govt. A prophecy made hundred years before by one of their great told them that a deliverer would come as a bird. That reminded me of the Eagle that had, during my illness, been haunting me, as I feared it had been damaged beyond repair. In spite of all it meant to me I had not asked about it. I was led by the priest to the church, through the wide door of which my Eagle had been carried and placed before the altar. I looked it over carefully and found that it was in good condition, except that the wings had lost their magnetism. I inspected it and found one wing covered by a pale yellow varnish—it was the wing that had been touched by the liquid from a geyser.

"It caused a perfect isolator, and I had had the presence of mind to use my dry battery at the crucial moment. I would not have had the fall; everything turns out for the best."

"When I was able to work I succeeded in cleansing the wings, and a machine was in working order again."

"Yesterday I thought I was strong enough to leave and I bade my goodby with the promise that I would return and bring help."

"This is a short recital of my doing during the two months past, and to my dear Astra, will you tell me that is now here?"

Napoleon had heard a few things from Whistler in Ciryne that disquieted him, and he was anxious to know the truth. That Astra could tell him best of all. So she began to relate all the important happenings while Napoleon listened attentively, making notes from time to time. Astra spoke of the European decree and all the facts that were officially communicated to her. Then she told of the newspaper rumors concerning the aerodrome fleet and the preparations for war that were supposed to be occupying the time of the European rulers.

"We have nine days at our disposal. I will be very busy for the next few days, but next Monday I will be ready to appear in the congress as the president of the International peace committee."

Early next morning Napoleon communicated with his brother workers in the peace committee, and then left the capital. He spent some hours at work designing a device to be used on the aerodromes. With six machines, equipped with men and horses, he headed for the valley of Xihuh.

That evening, after a peaceful meditation with the high priest they carried a large supply of the liquid that had put the Eagle out of commission, and returned to Ciryne. While Napoleon analyzed the liquid his workmen made several trips between the valley and Ciryne, carrying the liquid away in vast quantities.

Napoleon, after a thorough examination, sighed. "Here is something new. It puzzles me, but it solves the question of superiority in the air."

Napoleon's next move was to try out the new swallow-type machine. It was smaller than the Eagle, but the wings and the tail rudder were comparatively larger. It had not the grace of the Eagle in flight, but its speed was something unprecedented—it shot through the air like a streak.

Two more days passed. The third found every aerodrome equipped with a long tube very similar to the old style fire extinguisher. To this tube was connected a small automatic gun, which protruded through a special aperture in the body of the aerodrome. The lever controlling this gun was within easy reach of the aerodrome, and the gun itself was so arranged that it could be pointed in any direction.

The four aerodromes that had been sent toward the west were reported every few hours. They had seen nothing so far that was out of the ordinary.

It was Saturday evening that the last of the aerodromes was made ready for prompt action. Turning the command of the island over to Whistler, Napoleon returned to Washington. The Swallow made the trip in two hours.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Coal Smoke and Health.

The medical officer of health for Manchester, England, presents evidence to show that the working life of the people of that city is shortened ten years by the acids in smoke and the carbon particles which invade the lungs. Surgeon J. W. Stoner, of the United States public health service, traces a connection between a smoky atmosphere and the drinking habits of the people. Women living in smoky, gloomy homes, attired in somber clothes, breathing a smoke-filled atmosphere, are prone to be irritable, to scold and whip their children and to nag their husbands who flee to the saloon for solace and relief. Surgeon Stoner is also of the opinion that children reared in a depressing atmosphere are dull, apathetic and even criminally inclined. The smoke problem is still important.

The Outcome.

He—The man who offers me a drink insults my manhood.

She—Well, that's all right as long as you don't follow your usual course and swallow the insult.

Wisdom.

A wise wife soon learns to manage her husband, while a wise husband never tries to manage his wife.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Valley of Xihuh.

The first raptures of the reunion were over. Words took the place of mute expressions of love. Napoleon began to tell his story:

"No one knows of my return, except my men at Ciryne, and they will keep it to themselves. I did not use the graph, as I did not want certain people to know that I was safe—the papers would get hold of it and by morning Europe would know." He smiled. "They have tried to surprise us, and now we will surprise them."

His eyes rested lovingly on the two women who were his nearest and dearest.

"It is exactly eight weeks today since I left Washington to continue my search for something that I felt convinced nature had provided for a certain use; that is, to remove the electro-magnetism of ciryth. I found it, thanks be to Providence. The discovery nearly cost me my life, but I never was happier than the moment when my aerodrome was helplessly falling down. It is a wonder that I came out alive, but, aside from a few bruises, all is well."

"I was circling around an active volcano and the wing of the Eagle was touched by the warm fluid gushing up from a geyser. The wings folded together and the Eagle was helpless. I turned the tail rudder to break its fall, and thus escaped with my life."

A silent prayer went up from the two loving women, a prayer of thanks to Him who had saved him to save America.

"I lost consciousness when the aerodrome struck the ground by being hurled into the bench. When I opened my eyes it was night and I was on a low bed. An ancient oil lamp was flickering on a table at my head. I tried to sit up, but could not. My strength was gone; even my eyelids fell down, down, and I had a feeling that I was falling from a great height. I felt some one come near, and a moment later I felt a cooling bandage placed on my head by deft hands. I lost consciousness again and do not know how long I lay in a stupor, but I think it must have been at least eight days."

"The first clear moment I had I found that I was in the home of some rich Indian family. Later I found that they were Aztecs—indeed, the direct descendants of the Incas. In the clear moments during my fever I saw a very beautiful Aztec girl by my bedside nursing me. She was the daughter of the high priest, to whose house I had been taken."

"It was five weeks before I recovered from the terrible fall. As I regained my strength the old priest, named Xihuhama, assisted me to a porch-like structure that stood before the house, and I beheld a wonderful picture. A few hundred yards away was the smoking volcano, and several steaming geysers were spouting water in the air. At the foot of the cone-like peak stood a great church with strange statues and reliefs painted in vivid red, blue, yellow, black green and white colors. The whole reminded me of the pictures of ancient Egypt. Xihuhama's beautiful daughter came with us and brought



"When I Opened My Eyes It Was Night and I Was on a Low Bed."

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